

Storing Your Files



You may have heard the term "save it to your hard drive." That just means saving files to your computer's large storage space. If you want to take your files with you, however, you'll need to know about storage devices.

This is especially important if you do a lot of work on different computers or often work on public computers like those at your local library. Often, library computers are set up so that you can't save files on them. You'll need a portable storage option to take your files with you when you leave the library.

Storage devices can be used to store files and transport them between computers. You should have at least one storage method available so you can make backup copies of your important files in case the originals saved on your hard drive are lost.

CDs and DVDs



You are probably most familiar with CDs as a means of playing music, but they can also be used to store data. There are two major types of blank CDs that you can buy: CD-Rs (the R stands for Recordable) and CDRWs (the RW stands for Rewritable). Information is burned onto the CD using a CD writing software program. CD-Rs can only be used once, while CD-RWs can be erased and rewritten multiple times. You can also buy blank DVDs, which look like CDs but hold much more information. Many people use CDs to store photos from their digital camera. Take a second to locate the CD drive on your computer.

Flash Drives



One of the best and most popular portable storage methods used today is the flash drive (also called a thumb drive or jump drive). These tiny devices plug directly into your computer via a USB port. Most modern computers have at least 2 USB ports. Flash drives hold far more than a floppy disk and are more flexible than CDs; files can be moved to or from a flash drive as many times as you want, and you can even edit files right on the drive! Many people use flash drives to store documents and reports to transport from computer to computer. Flash drives are available in many different styles and storage capacities. You can buy a good basic model for \$8-\$20. Take a second to locate the USB ports on your computer.



On the Web

Recently, more and more online storage options are available, and these can be very convenient if you usually use computers that have a good Internet connection. Typically, these require signing up for a service and most online storage providers have a limited account available for free. Dropbox.com and Google Docs are two popular services. Using these, you simply upload a file from your computer to your storage account, and then you can retrieve it by logging into your storage account from any other net connected computer.